

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 NIC-01

SCCT-01 /069 W

----- 111402

R 261309Z MAR 75

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 869

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 101

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER SPENDS BUSY DAY IN ULSTER

REF: BELFAST 95

1. PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON SPENT BUSY SIX HOURS IN BELFAST MARCH 25. HE VISITED ARMY BARRACKS, MET AND LUNCHEDED WITH LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS, MET LEADERS OF THE FOUR LARGE CHURCHES IN PROVINCE AND MADE SEVEN-MINUTE VIDEO TAPE ANNOUNCING ELECTION FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION (TEXT FOLLOWS) WOULD BE HELD MAY 1.

2. THERE FAVORABLE REACTIONS TO VISIT AND TO TAPED REMARKS BY MOST LOYALIST POLITICIANS AND BY SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP). VANGUARD UNIONISTS AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS DID NOT RPT NOT MEET WITH P.M. REVEREND IAN PAISLEY REFUSED INVITATION TO LUNCH SAYING VISIT WAS POLITICAL DEVICE TO DRAW ATTENTION FROM PRIME MINISTER'S DIFFICULTIES WITHIN LABOUR PARTY OVER STAND ON EEC REFERENDUM. PAISLEY RECALLED "INSULT TO ULSTER PEOPLE BEING CALLED SPONGERS" AND STATED WILSON HAD CONSISTENTLY REFUSED MEET WITH UNIONISTS AT WESTMINSTER.

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HARRY WEST LEADER OF OFFICIAL UNIONISTS WHICH ALONG WITH

VANGUARD AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS IS LEG OF TRIPOD UNITED  
ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION (UUUC) SPOKE PRIVATELY AND LUNCHE  
WITH P.M. AND PRONOUNCED HIMSELF PLEASED BY EVENTS DAY.

3. IN TAPED ADDRESS ANNOUNCING DATE FOR ELECTION. PRIME  
MINISTER SEEMED CHEERFUL AND OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PROSPECTS  
CONVENTION SUCCESS. HE DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION IRISH  
DIMENSION OR POWER SHARING NOR DID HE MAKE ANY  
THREAT VEILED OR OTHERWISE ABOUT BRITISH REACTION SHOULD  
CONVENTION FAIL. HE EMPHASIZED THAT IN CONTRAST TO PREVIOUS  
SOLUTIONS PROPOSED, CONVENTION WOULD BE PURELY ULSTER  
UNDERTAKING AND GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT WILL "PAY VERY  
CLOSE HEED TO THE VOICES OF REASON AND CONCILIATION EXPRESSED  
THROUGH THE CONVENTION." P.M. EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY  
PARLIAMENTARY RATIFICATION OF ULSTER CONSTITUTION THAT "NOT  
BALANCED AND FAIR TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND"  
AND DENIED ANY VIEW THAT BRITISH GOVERNMENT COULD COERCE  
PEOPLE NORTHERN IRELAND INTO A UNITED IRELAND AGAINST THEIR  
WILL.

4. PAISLEY, WEST AND DEPUTY VANGUARD LEADER OPENED  
ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR UNIONISTS AS DID FITT FOR SDLP.  
UUUC STATEDLY WILL NOT RPT NOT PERMIT EMERGENCE OF  
"ILLEGITIMATE" GOVERNMENT IN WHICH POWER IS SHARED IN  
EXECUTIVE WITH THOSE WOULD DESTROY BOTH CONSTITUTION AND  
LINK WITH UNITED KINGDOM. WEST SAID P.M. HAD TOLD HIM  
OMISSION ANY REFERENCE TO POWER SHARING IN SPEECH QUITE  
DELIBERATE. FITT APPEALED TO ELECTORATE FOR REASON, SANITY  
AND MODERATION. MODERATES IN ALLIANCE. NORTHERN IRELAND  
LABOUR PARTY, UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND WELCOMED  
ANNOUNCEMENT OF EARLY ELECTION AND PRAISED TONE PRIME MINISTER'S  
ADDRESS.

5. IN WHAT MUST BE DISAPPOINTMENT TO SECSTATE REES AND AT  
LEAST SOME NORTHERN MEMBERS, PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN  
ANNOUNCED MARCH 25 IT WOULD NOT RPT NOT CONTEST ELECTION.  
DUBLIN ANNOUNCEMENT OF DECISION STRESSED IRRELEVANCY OF  
SIX COUNTY CONVENTION AND CONTINUED DOMINATION BRITISH.  
MAIRE DRUMM PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN VP IN NORTH APPARENTLY  
UNAWARE SUBSTANCE DUBLIN STATEMENT SAID MARCH 25 REASON FOR  
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ABSTENTION WAS CONTINUED DETENTION OF MORE THAN FOUR HUNDRED  
POTENTIAL CANDIDATES AND PARTY WORKERS. ULSTER VOLUNTEER  
FORCE WILL ALSO ABSTAIN. REPUBLICAN CLUBS (OFFICIAL SINN  
FEIN IN NORTH) WILL FIELD AT LEAST NINE CANDIDATES.

6. COMMENT: GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT OF BUILDUP TO  
CAMPAIGN CULMINATING IN PERSONAL VISIT AND ANNOUNCEMENT  
DATE BY PRIME MINISTER STILL GOING WELL (REFTEL).

WHILE SDLP CAN FIND GROUNDS CONCERN OVER OMISSION POWER SHARING  
ELEMENT IN SPEECH, LOYALIST SUSPICIONS OF P.M. AND LABOUR  
PARTY POLICY SHOULD BE FURTHER ALLAYED. GOVERNMENT IN  
FORESWEARING IMPOSED FORMULA IS CONSISTENT IN REMINDING  
PEOPLE OF ULSTER THAT SOLUTION IS UP TO THEM. IMPONDERABLES  
REMAIN BUT IF CEASEFIRE CONTINUES AND CONSEQUENTLY IF  
MODERATION CAN CONTINUE TO DILUTE TRADITIONAL TRIBAL LOYALTIES  
TO RIGID NEGATIVISM THERE IS STILL AT LEAST A HOPE OF  
PROGRESS IN THE CONVENTION TOWARD POLITICAL CONCILIATION OF  
THE ULSTER COMMUNITIES.

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